

Setting Summer Goals with Your Family

School's out for summer! You've made family vacation plans and booked camps for the kids, but have you and your children thought about setting goals this summer? Jon McGlothian, an entrepreneur and father of two, has some ideas on how you can be productive during these lazy crazy days of summer.

Jon says that if you're serious about trying to improve an area of your life, then you need goals to help monitor your progress and to understand what areas you need to work on. The goals act like guardrails or light posts. They help you stay on track so that you will be successful. He believes it's important for families to set goals together because a family should support each other. Setting goals is the vehicle or the means to the end...it is not the endpoint. It encourages everyone to talk to each other about their aspirations and desires. This way, everyone can support each other.

For example, if one of Jon's goals is to lose weight and his daughter knows this, then hopefully she won't make so many cookies and cakes. If he knows that his daughter is trying to work on her Spanish more, then he can make himself available to practice with her or at least not get in the way. It's also during this time that they can find out if there are any goals that contradict each other. In this case, you have to work it out so that it creates a win-win for the family. The point is that family members should support each other and the only way that they can do that is if they share their goals with each other.

Jon says that parents need to teach their children how to set **SMART** goals – **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ational and **T**ime-bounded goals. Goals should be Specific. Help your child break down the "big" goal into specific daily action steps. Goals should be Measurable. Ask your children to assign a quantifiable goal that they can hold themselves accountable against. Of course, kids' goals need to be Achievable. They shouldn't be too easy or too hard. Goals also need to be Rational. They shouldn't contradict other goals the kids have in place. Finally, goals should be Time-bounded. Deadlines are good!

Ask each family member to write down three specific goals that they want to accomplish over the summer. Put them on the refrigerator door so that everyone can see it for public accountability. Then write a specific action plan for each goal noting specific action steps that will be done each day to accomplish that goal. Failing to plan is planning to fail! Each evening at dinner, review specifically what you have done to work towards that goal so that there's daily accountability. The final step is to write the results in a journal each evening before you go to bed. In the future, you'll be able to review your journal to learn what worked for you.

Although setting goals sounds like a great plan for older kids and parents, Jon assures us that it's also something younger kids in elementary school can do. For example, a goal can be as simple as reading a book over the summer. Ask your kids to take the number of pages the book has and divide it by the number of days they have to read it. This will give them the number of pages that they must read each day to finish the book. So, if a book has 50 pages and they have five days to read it, then they must read at least 10 pages a day. Setting goals and taking the steps to achieve them is one of the keys to success that we want our children to learn as soon as possible.

According to Jon, there really isn't a magical reason for setting goals in the summer other than a change in schedules. You can set goals anytime of the year. However, if your family hasn't taken the time to set goals yet, find the time to make it happen this summer. It's an Olympic year, let's all have a successful goal achieving summer!